

Post-Holiday Stress

Is It Affecting Your Dog's Behavior?

Now that the holidays are over, you may notice some changes in your dog, particularly with respect to training issues you thought you had already resolved.

A previously housebroken dog starts having accidents. A dog that was fine being alone during the day starts acting destructive or anxious. A once happy dog is now displaying lethargic or hyperactive behaviors.

These new behaviors may all be signs of stress. Just as it is for us, the holidays can be a stressful time for your dog. Your schedule changed; you may have gone away for longer periods of time or had more company in your house than usual. In addition, if you were feeling stress around the holidays, you may have picked up on that as well. Don't worry, with a little bit of work and some extra patience, you can overcome these problems.

First, try to get your schedule back to normal. Dogs like routine and, if you can get back into your normal schedule and routine, your dog will start to feel more comfortable.

Second, reinstitute your leadership exercises. During

the holidays, it's easy to let these leadership exercises fall by the wayside. Not only are these exercises the foundation of your training program, but they also help reduce your dog's stress levels by ensuring your role as a benevolent leader. Don't forget to utilize the "Serene Homecoming" to reduce the stresses of your comings and goings.

If your dog has "forgotten" where to go to the bathroom, reinstitute a housetraining program. Make sure your dog goes out regularly, particularly after sleeping, meals and play. Keep your dog near you or confined at other times so you can prevent accidents before they happen.

If your dog has become destructive in the house, again take a step back in your training program. Confine them to a crate or a "dog safe" room when you aren't there. If the destructiveness occurs even when you are there, keep your dog near you when you are at home, using a leash, baby gates or ex-pens.

Once your dog has figured out that things are back to normal, you should see your "old" dog back soon.



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-Kelly Ryan

